

Higher Modern Studies: Voting Behaviour

Student Instructions

Work from Modern UK Politics P106 >. Answer the following in the form of short notes.

1. Under the heading 'Voting Behaviour' briefly explain what the clear two party system was up until 1970.
2. Describe how the influence of social class on voting began to become more complex in the 1970s. Mention de-alignment and Mondeo Man.
3. In what way were the 'new working class' from the C1 and C2 classes more attracted to Conservative values?
4. Briefly explain how their industries had changed and how the changes encouraged a more 'individualist' view of the world rather than a 'collectivist' view as had previously been reflected in strong trade unions with many members.
5. How did the changing views of so many working class people have an impact on the policies of the Labour Party?

New Labour & Social Class (P107) -

6. What was happening to traditional working class Labour voters and who did Tony Blair feel the Labour Party had to reach out to in their place?
7. Explain how Blair set out to attract voters with 'New Labour'. Mention the 'Big Tent' and a couple of policies New Labour adopted.
8. (P108) – Remember this book was written before the UK 2010 General Election. Briefly explain the difference between safe seats and marginal seats, and then explain why so-called 'Mondeo Man' and 'School Gate Mum' voters can be very important.
9. Explain why New Labour broke down voters into certain groups using similar software to that used by supermarkets when targeting certain types of customers. (Give two examples of which policies might appeal to which groups of voters.)
10. Copy & Complete: *The 2010 General Election brought an end to New L_____ 's great success story in attracting middle class voters and building a 'big t____t' of support. Throughout the 'noughties' the process of de-align_____ had continued as yet more voters moved away from tra_____nal party loyalties. This was aggravated by the MPs' exp_____s scandal in 2009 which led many people to lose faith in politicians and the UK political s_____m.*

Therefore, Labour's drop in popularity was not accompanied by a massive swing back towards the T____s, or to the Lib Dems (or SNP in Scotland). As the 2010 Election beckoned there was a worry that millions of voters would simply not t____ out. Some predicted the 75-80% turnouts of forty years ago would drop closer to 50% This however was largely prevented by the telev____d leaders' deb_____s which gained massive media attention and seemed to spark real interest in the election. The eventual turnout was ____.

*Nonetheless, the loss of faith in politicians may help to explain why **no party won the election**. Instead, votes were more evenly spread and, although the FPTP voting system still ensured that the two big parties did better than the Lib Dems thanks to their remaining concentrations of votes in safe seats, a hung parliament did result. This in turn led to a coalition government. How the parties fared is shown below:*

11. Now use your sheet on the 2010 General Election to provide some figures on the votes and seats won by various parties. (be very selective – you cannot write down all the figures so try to choose a few statistics you can remember and use in essays / answers). If you can't find your election sheet, you can open another at:
<http://www.schoolsproject.co.uk/msc/materials/ms/H/Voting/General%20Election%202010.pdf>

Gender

12. (P108)– Note that women were crucial to Labour's victory in 2005 and choose one or two statistics to back this up.
13. Explain who “Worcester Woman” is and why she became a significant target for political parties. Crucially, point out that she is a floating voter – the group that is vital to electoral success. Also mention a couple of policies which such voters are particularly interested in.
14. Take a very brief note on 'School Gate Mums'.
15. Finish with a sentence about the fact that Worcester Woman and School Gate Mum were the 'floating voters'.

Core & Floating Voters (*Remember you are producing a set of notes for revision.*)

16. (P110) – Describe where Labour & Conservatives core voters tend to live.
17. From the information in this section, explain what are the main differences are between core and floating voters.
18. Briefly explain the argument that under FPTP some voters are more influential than others. State whether you are convinced by this argument.

Competing influences on voters

19. Write one or two sentences explaining what is meant by 'competing influences on voters'.

Religion

20. What SNP policies have broadened their appeal among Catholic Labour voters?]
21. How did the Iraq war affect Muslim support of Labour?

Race

22. Take your own note on the section on Race (P112).

Age:

23. Repeat for Age (P113)

Impact of the Media

24. P113 – What makes up the 'broadcasting media' and what rules must be followed? Despite the rules, what do some politicians and academics still claim?
25. In what way is the print media – privately-owned newspapers – allowed to act differently from the broadcasting media?
26. Explain the idea that Prime Ministers and other govt ministers are always looking over their shoulder at newspaper headlines.
27. Explain what the job of spin doctors is and why political parties feel they are so important.
28. Politicians are rarely caught of balance. Briefly summarise how John Prescott made headlines in 2001 in a way which spin doctors had not planned.

Newspapers and their influence – a complex issue

29. P115-116 First read this section in the book. (Relax – don't rush to take notes.)
30. P115 - It is tempting to think newspaper owners and editors simply decide readers should follow their own view and therefore use their papers to persuade them to do so. However, things are more complex than this. The first job of newspapers is to sell papers. Nowadays parties are quite similar with their 'big-tent' approach with policies which try to attract a broad spectrum of people. Therefore newspapers do not want to offend large numbers of people with their views. From P115 explain the argument that newspapers may actually follow the readers views rather than the other way round.
31. Quality newspapers such as The independent, The Herald and The Times often support a particular part but how does In what way does their support differ from that shown by the red tops (i.e. tabloid papers such as The Sun & Daily Record.
32. P116 - It would be foolish to dismiss the media's influence but why is it difficult to assess its influence on voting behaviour?

The digital media

33. P116-117 First read this section. Then answer the 3 Activities at the bottom of P117 so that you end up with a short note on this topic.

The Party Campaign

34. P117 – Explain why Labour's 2007 campaign for Holyrood was not as good as the SNP's. - (include a mention to funding by rich individuals.)
35. P118 – The 2007 result suggests papers may not be as influential as we may think. Explain.
36. Who or what was the SNP's biggest asset and how did they use it? (Add your own sentence on the fact that this suggests party leaders are very important at a time when the mass media is so dominant in our every day lives.)